The third round of discussions on the Agreement on Regulation of Vehicular Traffic and the Rail Services Agreement was held in Kathmandu on February 8-12, 2003. The first round of discussion on the Extradition Treaty and the Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters was held in Kathmandu on February 16-19, 2003. During these discussions, substantial progress was achieved towards forging a common position on these subjects.

The bilateral meetings provided precious opportunities to review and strengthen our bilateral relations and exchange views on issues of mutual concern and interest.

Indo-Russian discussions

1633. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the discussion held during his visit to Moscow in February 2003;

(b) Whether the discussions covered the Indo-Russian joint venture at Kudankulam nuclear power project;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether it is a fact that Russia has sold military hardware to Pakistan; and

(e) if so, what are its consequences?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) During his visit to Moscow on 19-20 February 2003, Shri Yashwant Sinha, Minister of External Affairs, held wide ranging talks with the Russian leaders on issues of mutual interest. He met Mr. Vladimir V. Putin, President of the Russian Federation, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov and Industry and Science & Technology Minister Ilya Klebanov. In these talks, the two sides reviewed their bilateral relations and noted the convergence of views major international issues.

(b) No.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e) Yes. There is a likelihood of this military hardware being used against India. These concerns have been conveyed to the Russian authorities.

Anti-India Activities in Bangladesh

1634. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have had reports in early January this year about Al-Quaeda and ISI operatives engaged in anti-India terrorist activities, operating from Bangladesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) to (c) The Government periodically gets reports regarding activities of ISI including from Bangladesh. The Government has also seen reports regarding the presence of Al-Qaeda elements in Bangladesh. The Government has shared its concerns over these activities with the Government of Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh has assured that it would not allow its territory to be used for any anti-Indian activities.

"No First Use" of Nuclear Weapons Policy

1635. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any other nuclear weapon status country has declared 'No First Use' as its policy as has been declared by India;

(b) if so, the names of the countries;

(c) if not, whether India would reconsider its "No First Use" policy in view of threats by a neighbouring country; and

(d) whether necessary precautions have been taken to meet nuclear attacks on India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes. China has declared